



MISSION POSSIBLE

Effects of Stress & Bullying on Our Health & Well-being



LESSON DESCRIPTION

Mission Possible is an interactive and fun activity that uses balloons, markers, and group interaction to help students understand the social, emotional, and physical impact stress and bullying can have on our health. Too much stress or stress overload can affect mood, relationships, and school performance. Therefore, it is important for students to identify signs of stress so that they can create a plan to manage it.

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Overview & Outcome

As a result of this activity students will be able to:

- Understand and define the terms stress, stressor, stress overload, and stress management.
- Identify health risks and consequences a person may experience due to stress and bullying.
- Understand that stressors like bullying behavior, can have a serious and long-term impact on a person's physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and social wellness.
- List and describe how stress a student might be experiencing, affects their health and be aware of how and when to implement stress management strategies.

Time

This activity will take 30-45 minutes.

Preparation & Materials



- ✓ The instructor who is facilitating this activity should watch the instructional video titled Mission Possible at www.DignityPledge.com/CEAI prior to teaching this lesson.
- ✓ It is suggested that the Mission Impossible theme song be played as part of this activity. You can find this song on YouTube or use another resource.
- ✓ Students need to be divided into groups of no more than five students.

Each group of five students need:

- ✓ One *Stress Packet*
Each packet includes five Stress Worksheets. (Note: Make one copy of each of the five worksheets and put them in one folder to create a *Stress Packet*. One packet should be given to each group of students. Therefore, make as many packets as you need for the number of groups that are participating in this activity.)
- ✓ One 3' x 5' piece of white paper
- ✓ One plastic bag with markers
 - 1 black marker
 - 5 red markers
 - 5 blue markers

- ✓ One balloon with a small piece of paper stuffed inside it, with the *Mission Possible Instructions*. You can purchase pre-stuffed Dignity Revolution Balloons, and other teacher materials, online at www.DignityPledge.com/store
- ✓ *A-Z Health and Wellness Sheet* (one for each student)
- ✓ *What is Bullying or Harassment Sheet* (one for each student)
- ✓ *Respect Policy* (one for each student)

Note: If you don't have the Dignity Revolution balloons, you can create your own by copying the *Mission Possible Instructions* on a small piece of paper and stuffing one piece of paper into each balloon.

Inside each balloon is a rolled up small piece of paper which reads:

Stress is one of the main effects of bullying...

1. With your black marker quickly DRAW a large silhouette of a person on your paper.
2. With your blue marker DRAW and label all parts of the human body which are affected by bullying and/or stress. Then list the health risks next to each body part. (Example: Draw a heart and next to the heart write, "Heart beat beats faster.")
3. DRAW/LIST as many other risk factors for bullying and stress you can think of on the silhouette by using words and graphics.
4. The group with the most health risk factors associated with stress and bullying on the paper wins! Hurry...you only have a few minutes!

If anyone has a latex allergy, place the *Mission Possible Instructions* in a small brown paper lunch bag. Give one bag to each group. They can still "blow up" and pop the bag at the beginning of the activity.

Introduction

EXPLAIN Stress is the body's reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response. The body typically reacts to these changes or stressors with a physical, mental, social, and/or emotional response. This response is called a **stress response**.

Stress is a normal part of life. You can experience stress from your environment, body, and thoughts. Even positive life changes, such as receiving an award, starting a new job, or going on a first date with someone you like can be stressful. We call positive stress **eustress**.

Stress that is unwelcomed and continues without relief, is called **distress**. This type of stress can lead to stress overload which disturbs the body's internal as well as external balance. High levels of stress over a long period of time can be linked to six of the leading causes of death: heart disease, lung ailments, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver, and suicide.



What causes stress?

The situations and pressures that causes stress are known as **stressors**. Stressors can be classified into five categories which are **biological** (illness, injury, chemical imbalance), **environmental** (poverty, pollution, natural disasters), **cognitive** (the way you perceive a situation or what you expect from it), **behavioral** (tobacco use, drugs use, not exercising), and/or **situational** (death of a relative or pet, divorce, relationship problems).



What do you think are the top five stressors teens are confronted with today?

What is stress overload?

Stress overload is defined as excessive amounts and types of demands that require action. It is a human response that is experienced as a problem and contributes to the development of other problems. Stress overload is caused when stress lasts so long you begin to feel overwhelmed and out of control. Keeping the body on constant alert can damage your immune system as well as other major organs.



What are stressors that can overwhelm the body's ability to cope if they continue for a long time?

- being bullied or exposed to violence or injury
- relationship stress
- family conflicts
- heavy emotions that can accompany a broken heart or the death of a loved one
- ongoing problems with work or school
- conflicts with peers
- not having enough time to rest and relax



What are the risks of stress overload?

- anxiety or panic attacks
- stomach problems
- headaches
- chest pain
- allergic reactions (eczema or asthma)
- sleeping problems
- substance abuse (drinking problems, smoking, drugs use)
- sadness or depression



EXPLAIN

Do you think being the target of bullying or cyberbullying can cause stress overload?

We are going to engage in a fun and interactive activity called Mission Possible that will help you understand the impact that stress and stress overload can have on a person's overall health. We will break the class into groups of five (table or floor space works best) and each group will be given the following materials:

- One piece of large 3' x 5' white poster paper
- One plastic bag with 1 black marker, 5 red markers, and 5 blue markers
- One balloon NOT inflated with *Mission Possible Instructions* inside
- One *Stress Packet* (which will not be used by the students until Round 2)

Activity

EXPLAIN Round One: Mission Possible

Select one person in your group to blow up the balloon about $\frac{3}{4}$ inflated and tie it off. When the Mission Impossible music begins to play, someone needs to figure out a way to pop the balloon, remove the piece of paper from inside of the balloon and read the mission possible instructions to your group. After the mission is read, quickly complete the mission using the silhouette drawn on your paper, using a BLUE MARKER, and the knowledge each student brings to your group. Work as a team so that you do not duplicate answers on your silhouette. You have about three and a half minutes to complete the mission! On your mark, get set, go!

Note: When the Mission Impossible music ends, students are to put their blue markers in the plastic bag and count how many health risks they identified on their silhouette. Each risk factor drawn on their silhouette is worth one point. Write the total number of risk factors they identified as a group in the top left corner of the paper with the blue marker. Invite groups to share some of the risk factors they have listed on their posters.

EXPLAIN Round Two: Mission Possible

We are going to do this activity again, but this time you are allowed to use the resources found in the *Stress Packet* given to your group. Open the packet before the music begins and distribute the materials so that everyone in your group has at least one resource to use. Using the *Stress Packet* materials, each person in your group adds this new information to your silhouette using a RED MARKER. Every time you add in red a new risk factor, quickly share this information with your group out loud so they can learn something new, too. The same rules apply as last time, no duplicate answers.

Note: If you want to extend this lesson you could teach students about reliable resources and have them go online and research effects of stress on our bodies. Otherwise, feel free to use the *Stress Packet* provided.

Play the Mission Impossible music one more time to begin Round 2 of the activity and have students use resources found in the *Stress Packet* to add additional risk factors.

After about three and a half minutes, have each group count how many new health risks they came up with and write the total on top right corner of your paper in red. Discuss what they learned from doing the activity a second time.

Reflection: Using the [A-Z Health and Wellness Sheet](#) and your groups mission possible silhouette, identify a health risk or medical condition a person might experience as a result of stress or bullying.



Examples:

Anxiety

Bowel issues

Constipation

Decreased Immune System

Discussion



What did you learn regarding stress and how it might impact your health?

What surprised you?

How does stress impact a person's wellness long and short-term?

How might prolonged stress impact a person's mental health?

How might bullying impact a person's health?

When a person is the recipient of bullying behavior, what long-term health risks might they experience?

What steps would you take if you observed someone being bullied?

Do you know how to access your school's bullying policy?

Note: Hang the posters/silhouettes the students made on a classroom wall for a week or more as a reminder of how stress can impact our health. Reinforce with students the importance of managing our stress as well as choosing behaviors that do not increase the stress of others. Reinforce the mission of Dignity Revolution: Standing Up for the Value of Every Person.

EXPLAIN

Bullying doesn't just place a person under emotional stress, it places the body under physical, social, and mental stress as well. In today's activity we examined the impact that stress and bullying have on our health and the health and well-being of others.

All of the people involved in bullying events are stressfully impacted. Each day people receive hurtful messages and they impact the target who is receiving these messages. Before you send that email or post on social media, ask yourself is it true and is it kind? Stress and bullying have many negative effects on an individual. They can consume us and interfere with our health and well-being. Today we can change this. We can make a positive difference.

Note: Review your school district's bullying policy and procedures. Have a discussion regarding the importance of addressing and properly reporting bullying behavior in your school and how to effectively follow your school's guidelines as it relates to reporting a bullying or harassment event. If your school does not have a bullying policy, you are invited to use the [Respect Policy](#) and the [What is Bullying or Harassment Sheet](#).



“We don’t have to be influenced or controlled by a society that tells us we’re not good enough. We don’t have to live as victims, falling into self-pity and despair over past experiences. Nor should we fight injustice with hatred. The answer lies elsewhere. We can become part of the solution. We can transform our world where lives have purpose and meaning for all, no matter what has been said or done to us, no matter our past mistakes, no matter what this life hands us. We can demonstrate resilience when faced with life’s challenges. Life is worth living. I dare you. I dare you to become part of the Dignity Revolution, no matter what” (Lenz 7).



“Bullying strips people of their dignity. It devalues human beings. It takes advantage of the weak” (Lenz 24).



How can we be the change?

How can we reduce or manage our stress?

How can we prevent others from feeling stressed in school by stopping or preventing the bullying or hurtful behaviors?

How can we stand up for the value and dignity others?

Conclusion



What did you learn as a result of this activity?

Deciding to be the change is going to take courage, it’s not easy to be brave and stand up for others – but it’s worth it! Let’s commit today to be the change.

NATIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION (K-12)

STANDARDS: 1.8.1, 1.8.3, 1.12.3



Effects of Bullying on Our Bodies:

Over 3.2 million young people are being bullied each year. It is estimated that 20 percent of high school students are being bullied at any given time. That's one in five being hit, shoved, taunted, or intimidated.

Someone who has been the victim of bullying or abuse is more likely to act out in unhealthy ways. Some include the following:

- Self-abuse, unexplainable injuries, talking about suicide, and risky behaviors. It is estimated that two million Americans are cutting or harming themselves.
- Loss of appetite or change in eating patterns.
- Frequent illness including headaches, stomachaches, or faking sickness.
- Decreased academic achievement or lack of motivation to go to school.
- Depression and anxiety.
- Feelings of being alone and wanting to isolate from social situations or decreased self-esteem.
- Difficulty sleeping.

If you or someone you know is the target of any type of abuse, break the silence. Tell someone, anyone!





Signs and Symptoms of Stress

The following are common warning signs and symptoms of stress. The more signs and symptoms you notice in yourself, the closer you may be to stress overload.

Behavioral Symptoms

- Isolating yourself from others
- Eating more or less
- Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Procrastinating
- Disregarding responsibilities
- Nervous habits

Cognitive Symptoms

- Memory problems
- Poor judgment
- Anxious thoughts
- Inability to concentrate
- Constant worrying
- Seeing only the negative
- Racing thoughts
- Forgetful or disorganized

Emotional Symptoms

- Moodiness
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Sense of loneliness and avoiding others
- Irritability or short temper
- Easily agitated
- Inability to relax
- Depression or general unhappiness
- Low self-esteem

Physical Symptoms

- Aches, pains, or muscle tension
- Low energy
- Nausea or dizziness
- Chest pain or rapid heartbeat
- Headaches
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Frequent colds
- Insomnia



Common Signs and Symptoms of Stress

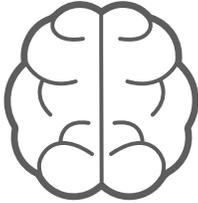
The following are common warning signs and symptoms of stress. The more signs and symptoms you notice in yourself, the closer you may be to stress overload.

- Frequent headaches
- Clenching jaw
- Grinding teeth
- Stuttering
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Difficulty breathing
- Little interest in appearance
- Nervous habits
- Increased frustration
- Overreaction to trivial annoyances
- Increased number of minor accidents
- Obsessive or compulsive behavior
- Reduced work efficiency
- Lies or excuses to cover up poor work
- Rapid or mumbled speech
- Excessive defensiveness or suspiciousness
- Problems in communication
- Social withdrawal
- Constant tiredness
- Sudden attacks of life-threatening panic
- Chest pain
- Frequent urination



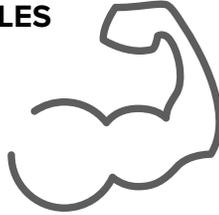
Possible Effects of Stress on the Human Body

BRAIN



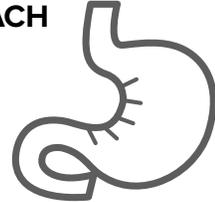
Increased risk of slower processing, headaches, tremors, or nervous tics

MUSCLES



Increased risk of aches, pains, tension, inflammation, or lack of flexibility

STOMACH



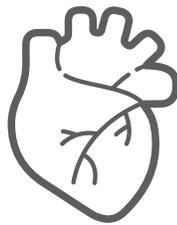
Increased risk of stomach cramping, nausea, weight fluctuation, or could lead to diabetes

SKIN



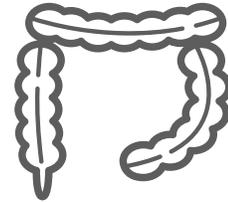
Increased risk of acne, eczema, dryness, or other skin rashes

HEART



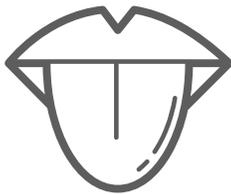
Increased risk of hypertension, chest pains, heart attack, or high cholesterol

BOWELS



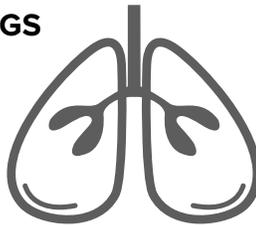
Increased risk of digestive issues like abdominal pain, diarrhea, or constipation

MOUTH/SALIVA



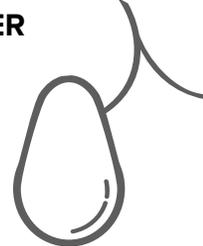
Increased risk of dryness of mouth, lump in throat, or mouth ulcers

LUNGS



Increased risk of coughs, asthma, or strained breathing

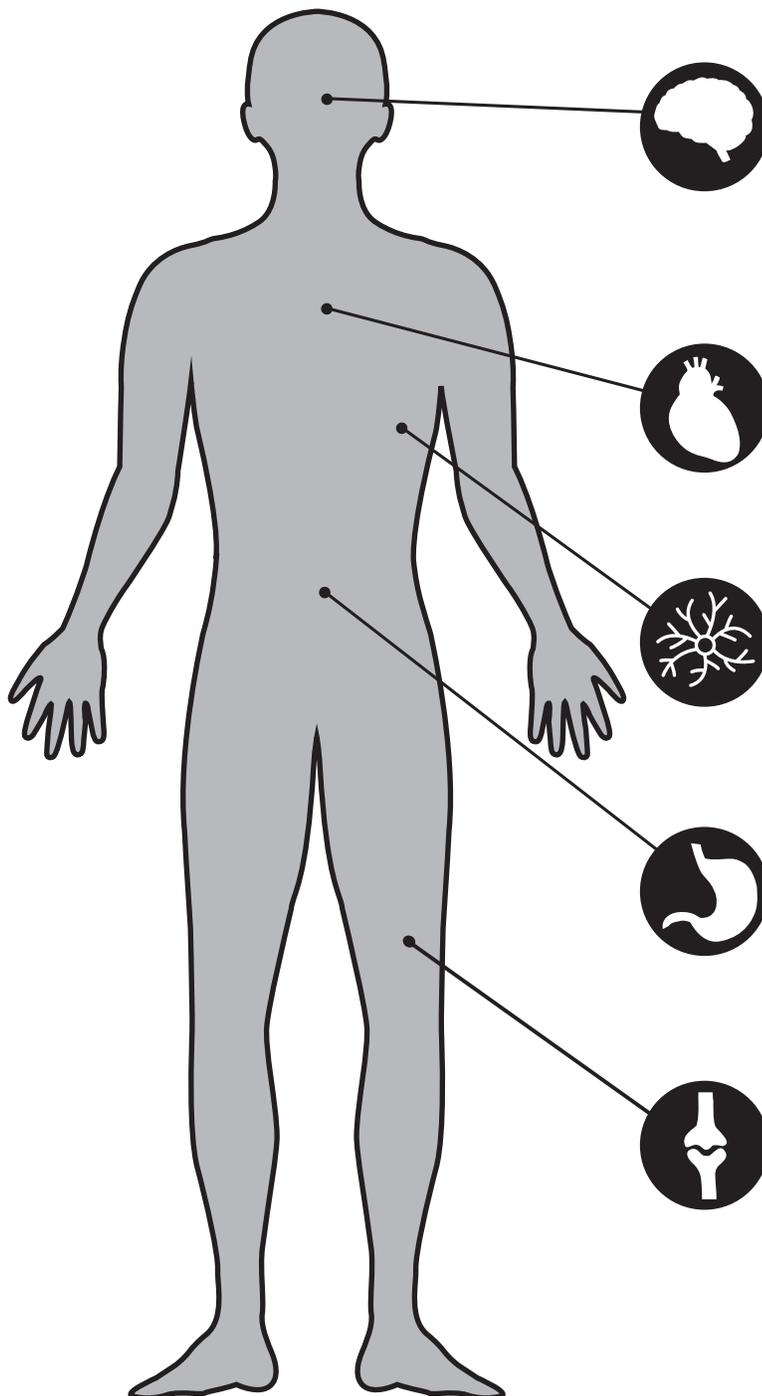
BLADDER



Increased risk of frequent urination, or prostatic symptoms



How Stress Affects Human Body Systems



MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL

Anxiety, panic disorders, depression, anger, headaches, sleeping disorders, nightmares, lack of energy and concentration, addictions, isolation, suicidal thoughts, tremors, mood swings, loneliness, OCD, learning disabilities, lying, nervousness

HEART & LUNGS

Increased heart rate, high blood pressure, risk for heart attack and high cholesterol, fatigue, difficulty breathing, chest pain

IMMUNE SYSTEM

Frequent illness, inability to fight infection, colds, sores, rashes, pain disorders, unexplained allergies, excessive sweating

GASTROINTESTINAL

Acid reflux, nausea, cramping, bloating, belching, increased or decreased appetite, eating disorders, dry mouth, swallowing problems, constipation, diarrhea, weight gain or loss

MUSCULOSKELETAL

Unexplained aches and pains in joints, bones, and muscles, decreased bone density, TMJ, jaw clenching, teeth grinding, clumsiness, neck or back pain



Name: _____

Take each letter of the alphabet below and using that letter, create a word or phrase that is associated with the impact that stress from a bullying or harassment event might have on a person's overall health and wellness.

- A _____
- B _____
- C _____
- D _____
- E _____
- F _____
- G _____
- H _____
- I _____
- J _____
- K _____
- L _____
- M _____
- N _____
- O _____
- P _____
- Q _____
- R _____
- S _____
- T _____
- U _____
- V _____
- W _____
- X _____
- Y _____
- Z _____



STRESS



MAY INCLUDE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING BEHAVIORS

Name-Calling	Hitting
Making Threats	Touching
Spreading Rumors	Pranks and Hazing
Telling Demeaning Jokes	Vandalism
Making Fun of Someone	Unwanted Pursuit of a Relationship
Making Obscene/Provocative Gestures	Cyberbullying
Physical Intimidation	Harassing Text Messages or Calls

DIRECTED TOWARD AN INDIVIDUAL BECAUSE OF

Gender	Pregnancy
Race	Marital Status
Religion	Sexual Orientation
Age	Physical Traits
National Origin	Individual Characteristics
Ancestry	Physical or Mental Disability
Creed	Emotional or Learning Disability

WHICH CREATES A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

The behavior is so severe or persistent that it interferes with an individual's performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.



Respect is the cornerstone of our relationships. We are committed to respecting the dignity and worth of each individual at our school and strive never to degrade or diminish any member of our school community by our conduct, actions, or attitudes. We benefit from each other. Our diversity makes us strong.

School Response to Bullying and Harassment

Harassment or bullying of students or staff undermines our school’s commitment to respect. Bullying and harassment are prohibited by state and federal law, as well as school policy. Our school will not tolerate bullying or harassment of students or staff.

MAY INCLUDE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING BEHAVIORS	DIRECTED TOWARDS AN INDIVIDUAL BECAUSE OF	WHICH CREATES A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT
Name-Calling Making Threats Spreading Rumors Telling Demeaning Jokes Making Fun of Someone Making Obscene Gestures Making Provocative Gestures Physical Intimidation Hitting Touching Pranks and Hazing Vandalism Unwanted Pursuit of a Relationship Cyberbullying Harassing Text Messages or Calls	Gender Race Religion Age National Origin Ancestry Creed Pregnancy Marital Status Sexual Orientation Physical Traits Individual Characteristics Physical or Mental Disability Emotional or Learning Disability	The behavior is so severe or persistent that it interferes with an individual’s performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

How do I report Bullying or Harassment?

Contact an administrator, counselor, teacher, or staff member in person and/or complete the Bullying/Harassment Report and give it to the appropriate staff member.

Sample respect policy form adapted from that used by North High School, Eau Claire (Wisconsin) Area School District. Compiled by Deborah L. Tackmann and Life Promotions, Inc. Used with permission.



Mission Possible

Respect Policy: Sample Bullying/ Harassment Report



Note: Whenever possible, have the student involved in the complaint complete the top half of this report.

Name of Student Making Report _____ Date of Report _____

Date & Time of Incident _____ Location of Incident _____

Name(s) of Individual(s) suspected of harassment or bullying _____

Description of Incident _____

Witnesses Present _____

How would the student like this resolved? _____

I hereby certify this is an accurate description of my written report. (Attach a copy of student's written report.)

Signature of Reporting Student _____ Date _____

Name of Reporting Staff Member _____ Date _____

COMMENTS:

Administrator Intervention Requested

No Administrator Intervention Requested at this time

Administrative Response:

Original: Principal

Copies: Reporting Staff Member & Counselors

Sample bullying report form adapted from that used by North High School, Eau Claire (Wisconsin) Area School District. Compiled by Deborah L. Tackmann and Life Promotions, Inc (Lenz 60).